

they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 13, 1998.

Linda Engelmeier,

Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of Management and Organization.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030498C]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Atlantic Shark Fisheries; Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Applications for EFPs; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the receipt of four applications for EFPs. If granted, these EFPs would authorize, over a period of 1 year, collections for public display of a limited number of sharks from the large coastal and prohibited species groups from Federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean.

DATES: Written comments on the applications must be received on or before April 6, 1998. Applications for EFPs must be received on or before April 29, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Rebecca Lent, Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management Division (F/SF1), NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The applications and related documents and copies of the regulations under which exempted fishing permits are subject may also be requested from this address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margo Schulze, 301-713-2347; fax: 301-713-1917.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: These EFPs are requested under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and regulations at 50 CFR 600.745 concerning scientific research activity, exempted fishing, and exempted educational activity.

South Carolina Aquarium, in Charleston, SC, intends to collect no more than 12 sharks from the large coastal and/or prohibited species management units for public display by using buoy gear, rod and reel, and longlines of approximately 35-40 hooks. Fishing will occur in the Atlantic Ocean

from North Carolina south to the middle Florida Keys. Issuance of an EFP is necessary, according to the applicant, because the commercial season for large coastal sharks is closed for long periods of time and because possession of sand tiger sharks is prohibited. The applicant also requested that the EFP authorize collection of sharks from the small coastal and pelagic management units; however, as the commercial seasons for small coastal sharks or pelagic sharks have not closed to date, these species may be possessed legally by obtaining a Federal commercial shark permit and an EFP is not required.

Ripley's Aquarium, in Myrtle Beach, SC, intends to collect 25 sand tiger sharks, 8 sandbar sharks, 8 blacktip sharks, 4 tiger sharks, 4 scalloped hammerhead sharks, and 4 great hammerhead sharks for public display by using hook and line and longlines consisting of no more than 30 hooks. Fishing will occur in the Atlantic Ocean off New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. Issuance of an EFP is necessary, according to the applicant, because the commercial season for large coastal sharks is closed for long periods of time and because possession of sand tiger sharks is prohibited. The applicant also requested that the EFP authorize collection of 25 bonnethead sharks; however, as the commercial season for small coastal sharks has not closed to date, this species may be possessed legally by obtaining a Federal commercial shark permit and an EFP is not required.

Florida Aquarium, in Tampa, FL, intends to collect three sand tiger sharks for public display by using authorized Florida recreational marine fishing gear. Fishing will occur in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea (Florida area). Issuance of an EFP is necessary, according to the applicant, because possession of sand tiger sharks is prohibited.

Aquarium of the Americas, in New Orleans, LA, intends to collect eight sand tiger sharks for public display and research by using hook and line, longlines consisting of approximately 90 hooks, and/or single hook Block set-lines. Fishing will occur in the Atlantic Ocean off Cocodrie, LA, from April through May and off Delaware Bay from June through August. Issuance of an EFP is necessary, according to the applicant, because possession of sand tiger sharks is prohibited.

The proposed collections for public display involve activities otherwise prohibited by regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plan for Sharks

of the Atlantic Ocean. The applicants require authorization to fish for and to possess large coastal sharks outside the Federal commercial seasons and to fish for and to possess prohibited species.

Based on a preliminary review, NMFS finds that these applications warrant further consideration. A final decision on issuance of EFPs will depend on the submission of all required information and on NMFS' review of public comments received on the applications, conclusions of any environmental analyses conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, and any consultations with any appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, states, or Federal agencies.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: March 16, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Proposed Amendments to the Price Limit and Trading Halt Provisions in Domestic Stock Index Futures Contracts

AGENCY: Commodity Futures Trading Commission

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed amendments to the price limit and trading halt provisions in domestic stock index futures contracts listed on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Chicago Board of Trade, Kansas City Board of Trade, and New York Futures Exchange.

SUMMARY: The Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT), Kansas City Board of Trade (KCBT), and New York Futures Exchange (NYFE) have submitted proposals to modify existing "circuit breaker" and related price limit provisions in those exchanges' domestic stock index futures contracts. The Director of the Division of Economic Analysis (Division) of the Commission, acting pursuant to the authority delegated by Commission Regulation 140.96, has determined that publication of the proposals for comment is in the public interest, will assist the Commission in considering the views of interested persons, and is consistent with the purposes of the Commodity Exchange Act.

DATE: Comments must be received on or before April 6, 1998.